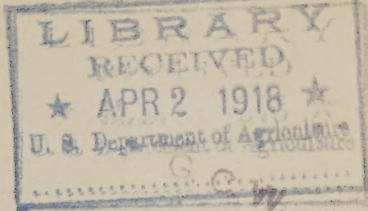


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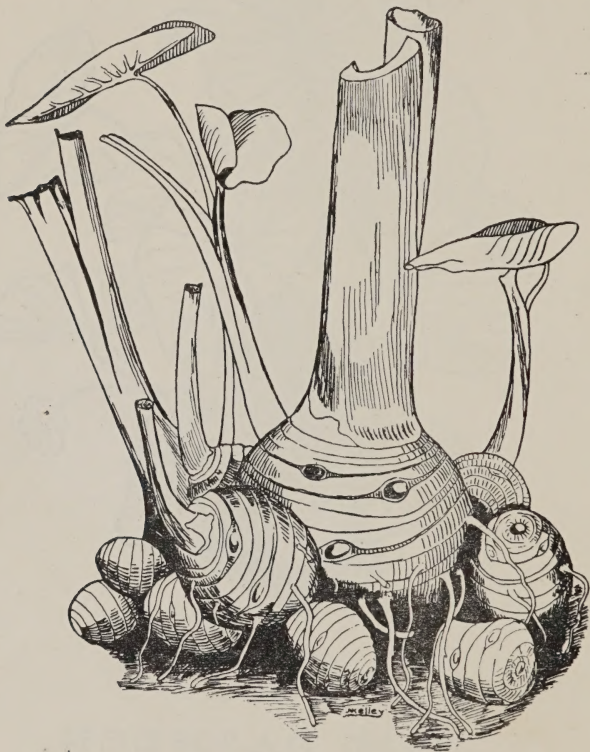


A growing hill of dasheens.

THE DASHEEN.

The dasheen is a delicious vegetable recently introduced into culture in the southern states. The taro, of which this is an especially fine flavored variety, furnishes a staple food for millions of people in tropical and sub-tropical countries. Various parts

of the plant are edible, but the principal food is furnished by the large, spherical *corm*, or central "tuber," and a number of smaller *tubers* which are

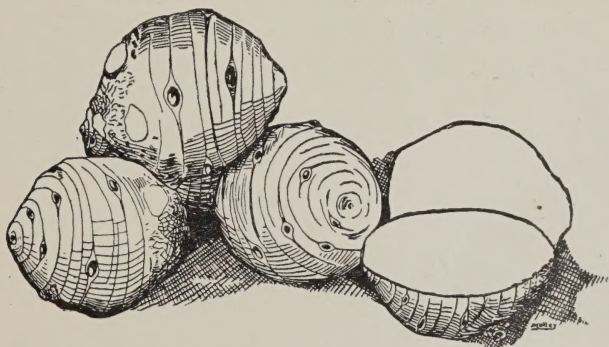


A hill of dasheens. The large central CORM, with part of leaf stems still attached, is surrounded by the TUBERS, just as they grow.

attached to it in the ground. If the suggestions made here regarding preparation and prompt serving

are carefully followed, the dasheen cannot fail to please.

It is usually mealy in texture and slightly nutty in flavor, and the taste for it grows on one. The dasheen and the potato are very similar in composition, food value, and uses, each of them containing starch as the principal nutritive substance though there is also in each of them an appreciable amount of protein and, as compared with other foods, a good proportion of mineral matter.



Dasheen corms. One is cut in half from top to base, ready for parboiling and baking.

However similar they may be, no two food-stuffs are exactly alike in their nature and uses and the dasheen has some advantages. One of them is its distinctive nutty flavor and another is its very general lightness and dryness when cooked.

A starchy food is a welcome and valuable addition to most of our meals. One reason for using dasheen is that it enables the housekeeper to vary the starchy foods without unusual labor or unusual expense.

One of the most popular ways of cooking the dasheen corms is the following:

Remove the loose fiber, parboil the corm for 10 to 15 minutes and then bake in a *moderate* oven. If a corm weighs 2 pounds or more, cut it in half *from top to base*, to reduce the time of baking. About the same time is required as for potatoes of the same size—possibly less. Do not overbake. Use a fork or knitting needle to test. The interior varies from white to cream, grayish, or violet when cooked.

When done, the dasheens should be broken or cut open at once to let the steam escape, placed in a warm dish, covered with a napkin, and served *immediately*. Season the same as potatoes, except that more butter may be needed.

If desired, the fibrous skin may be scrubbed or scraped off before parboiling, and if the corms are not baked too long the soft crust formed will be of delicious flavor. A level teaspoonful of *sodium carbonate* (*washing soda*) should be added to the water in which the scraping is done, to prevent irritation to the hands.

Corms dug less than a month may burst open and become water-soaked if cooked entirely by boiling, but later in the season boiling is often a quite satisfactory way of cooking, if baking is not convenient.

The foregoing directions refer particularly to the dasheen *corms*, but the *tubers*, which are usually much smaller, are prepared in much the same way except that they are served whole after baking or boiling.

United States Department of Agriculture,
Bureau of Plant Industry,
Foreign Seed and Plant Introduction.